

# Kentucky Teacher™

AUGUST 2003

## Department launches new team to help schools close achievement gaps

Five Kentucky educators began work on July 1 to help Kentucky schools close academic achievement gaps.

Formally known as “closing the achievement gap school improvement coordinators,” the five offer leadership and assistance to school staffs and students. Each coordinator has experience with school assistance programs, and each targets a specific area of the state:

- Western Kentucky – Kay Brown, a highly skilled educator and former principal in Owensboro
- Northern Kentucky – Louise Byrd, also a highly skilled educator and a former Jefferson County teacher
- Jefferson and Fayette counties – Michael Dailey, former assistant in the Department of Education’s Office of Legal and Legislative Services and participant in the department’s Minority Student Achievement Task Force
- Eastern Kentucky – Sue Davis, another highly skilled educator, former principal at Boyd County Middle School
- South-central Kentucky – Gary Perkins, former regional service center director

The coordinators will work closely with other department staff to design assistance programs for schools. Their main objective is to reduce achievement gaps within schools through a systemic approach to school improvement.

They will identify school and district needs; network with professional development providers; collect data from scholastic audits and reviews to pinpoint successful programs and areas of weakness; and deliver services to schools and districts based on individual needs.

All of the coordinators are accessible by e-mail through the KETS global list. For additional information about this new resource, contact Gary Perkins at (502) 330-9123 or [gperkins@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:gperkins@kde.state.ky.us), or visit the Web at [www.kentuckyschools.org](http://www.kentuckyschools.org) (enter “#area coordinators” in the keyword/search box).

## *Deadline is Sept. 18 for this fall’s online ‘p.d.’*

The Kentucky Virtual High School offers courses not only for students but for educators and parent representatives on school councils, too. The registration deadline for the fall ’03 seven-week professional development courses is Sept. 18.

All courses meet the Department of Education’s 11 standards for professional development. A knowledgeable professional facilitates all courses. Online courses give participants the flexibility to manage their own learning time. Participants can earn from one

to 12 hours per course, depending on the scope of their participation. Some courses offer credits required of instructional leaders and school-based decision making council members. Individual school policies determine whether professional development hours are awarded at the local level for participation in these courses.

For course descriptions and general information, visit [www.kvhs.org](http://www.kvhs.org) and click on “Professional Dev,” or contact Nancy Hill at (502) 564-4772 or [nhill@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:nhill@kde.state.ky.us).

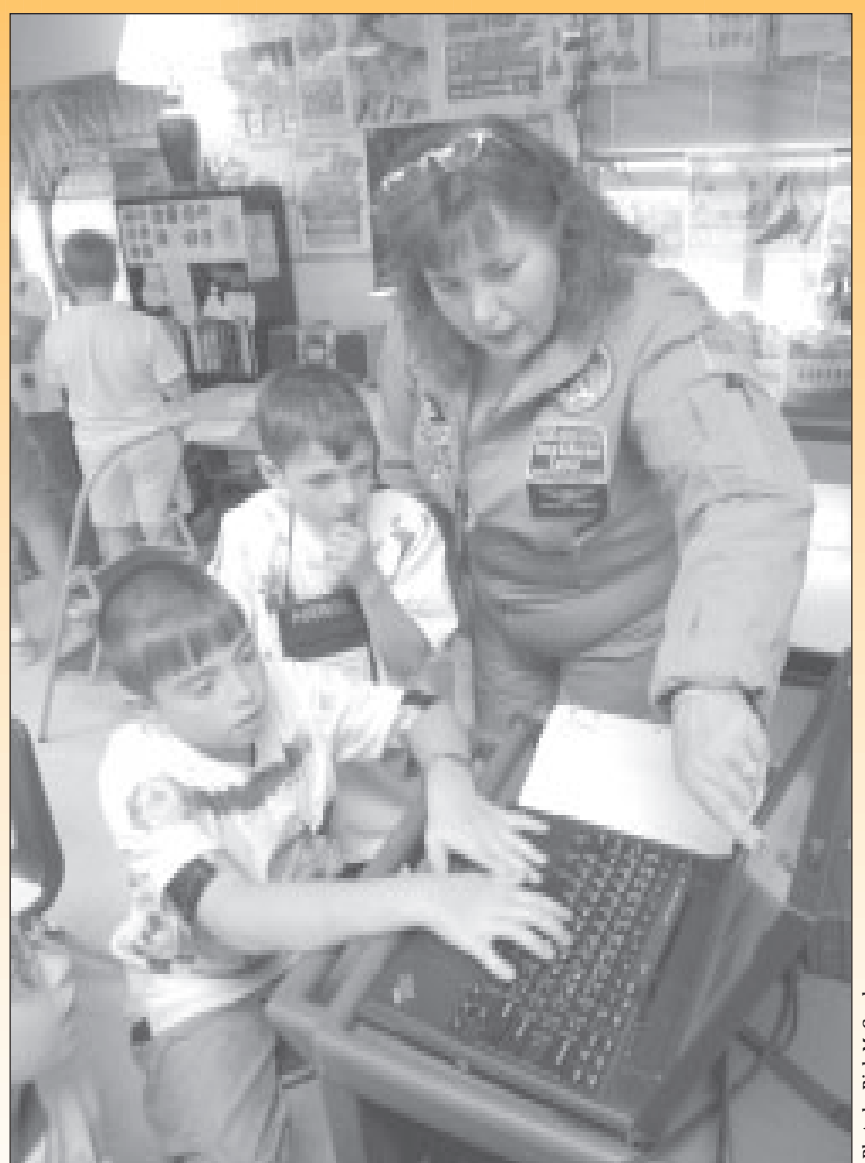


Photo by Rick McComb

### *High Flyers*

Saffell Street Elementary students Tye Sutherland and Christopher Vest get assistance from “Mission Control,” a.k.a. Ginny Thompson, as they view sights and conduct experiments during a mock journey to the International Space Station. Thompson, a teacher at the Anderson County school, used skills she gained during training at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville, Ala., to develop an integrated unit of instruction based on space travel. For more information about Kentucky’s Space Academy and Advanced Space Academy for Educators, or other activities related to space education, contact Karen Kidwell Malphrus at (502) 564-2106 or [kkidwell@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:kkidwell@kde.state.ky.us).

## Commissioner's Comments

# Taking Education's Message on the Road



Photo by Rick McComb

Education Commissioner Gene Wilhoit gestures to illustrate gaps in student achievement levels during a discussion with first-year Montgomery County school board member Randall Chewning. Montgomery County was the sixth of at least 18 stops on Wilhoit's tour of the state to enlist public support for continued progress in Kentucky P-12 public schools.

By Gene Wilhoit  
Commissioner of Education

The past few months have been a dynamic time for public K-12 education in Kentucky.

The 2003 General Assembly shielded public education from drastic budget cuts. In fact, the legislators provided "additional" funding for districts. However, in the process, they had to cut state services that provided continuing support for school improvement.

The federal government continues to push states to adopt one-size-fits-all changes that will affect the Commonwealth Accountability Testing (CATS).

We will have a new governor in January who will wrestle with one of the most difficult financial situations in decades.

More than ever, public education needs advocates who will help the public understand what is really happening in our schools. To that end, I have dedicated the next few months to sharing current infor-

mation about Kentucky education with business and civic groups throughout the state. At this writing, I have scheduled 20 meetings at locations from Paducah to Hazard. Audiences will include chamber of commerce representatives, Rotary and Kiwanis members, and their guests – including local education leaders.

My mission: to heighten understanding of Kentucky education and enlist support in protecting the progress made over the past decade.

My messages:

- CATS was designed carefully and thoughtfully through a process involving thousands of Kentuckians. Our comprehensive and aggressive system is working. We have accurate measures of student performance and school progress, and those measures are showing that instruction and learning are steadily improving in virtually every content area at every grade level. NAEP, SAT and ACT results show parallel progress.

- Kentucky has succeeded in equalizing education funding but is not adequately funding our public schools. Because inflation has outpaced allocation, public education has lost financial ground. K-12 education spending has decreased as a percentage of the state's total budget, and the quest for excellence is in jeopardy.

I am presenting these realities to Kentucky's business and community leaders, and I am encouraging open discussion. As I prepare for future meetings, I welcome your participation and support. What messages do the business and civic leaders in your area most need to hear? What misperceptions continue, in spite of efforts to be open and forthright?

Please share your perspectives with me, and please help me spread the word that public education needs and deserves business and community support to continue its steady improvement. To assist you in that effort, the Department of Education offers "Proof of Progress," a new resource that makes accurate, data-supported information readily available online. Included is "Rapid Response Reality Check," designed to shine light on issues that make their way into the public forum. You'll find "Proof of Progress" on the department's Web site.

The months between now and the 2004 session

of the General Assembly are crucial to the future of public education in our state. I urge you to discuss these issues in your communities. We cannot expect Kentuckians to support their leaders in making wise choices on tough issues unless they know and understand what is at stake.

To comment on this topic, phone the commissioner at (502) 564-3141 or send e-mail to [gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:gwilhoit@kde.state.ky.us).

For more about "Proof of Progress," see Page 5. To locate this new resource online, go to [www.kentuckyschools.org](http://www.kentuckyschools.org) and enter "#progress" in the keyword/search box.

### KTLC Update

#### Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference

March 4-6, 2004

Kentucky International Convention Center,  
Louisville

#### Registration Fees

Full conference – \$100 early, \$125 on site

One day – \$60 early, \$75 on site

Students – \$40 early, \$50 on site

Participation in conference-related workshops involves additional fees. See the KTLC registration booklet for details or check online at [www.kentuckytlc.org](http://www.kentuckytlc.org).

#### Hotel Reservations

Visit [www.kentuckytlc.org](http://www.kentuckytlc.org) and click on "Lodging"; call (502) 561-3100 or toll free (800) 743-3100; or fax reservation requests to (502) 561-3121.

To reserve five or more rooms, contact Dawn Clover at (502) 560-0012 or [dclover@gotolouisville.com](mailto:dclover@gotolouisville.com).

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Questions about KTLC? Watch for updates at [www.kentuckytlc.org](http://www.kentuckytlc.org) or contact Kay Anne Wilborn at (502) 564-3421, (800) 533-5372 or [kwilborn@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:kwilborn@kde.state.ky.us).

#### Share what works!

Apply by Sept. 12 to present at KTLC 2004.

For details, visit [www.kentuckytlc.org](http://www.kentuckytlc.org) or contact

Cheryl Sanders – [csanders@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:csanders@kde.state.ky.us)  
(502) 564-3421 or (800) 533-5372.

# LEADERSHIP LETTER

Compiled by Joy Barr  
Kentucky Department of Education

*Note: "Leadership Letter," published since the early '90s, now becomes a page in Kentucky Teacher. The change saves money in these tight economic times, but it also puts leadership news into the hands of a wider audience, including teachers – who, after all, lead school improvement efforts every day.*

## New program prepares minority superintendents

Three African American educators have accepted internships designed to prepare them to become Kentucky's first minority school superintendents.

As participants in the Kentucky Department of Education's new Minority Superintendent Intern Program, the three educators will work throughout the 2003-04 school year as assistants to successful superintendents. All three interns come from primary/elementary school positions:

- Sara Elaine Farris, elementary school director, Fayette County (interning with Shelby County Superintendent Leon Mooneyhan);
- Anthony Ray Sanders, principal, Highland Elementary, Christian County (interning with Daviess County Superintendent Stu Silberman);
- Youlanda Washington, principal, Pierce Primary School, Fort Knox Community Schools (interning with Oldham County Superintendent Blake Haselton).

The interns will develop individual growth plans and have regular meetings and networking sessions with superintendents, board of education members and search firms. They will also gain practical experience in public relations, curriculum/assessment/instruction issues, labor relations, human resources, facility management, and finance and budgeting.

For details about this new program, contact Robby Morton at (502) 564-1479 or [rmorton@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:rmorton@kde.state.ky.us).



Photo by Rick McComb

**Superintendent intern Elaine Farris listens as educators and other stakeholders discuss plans to replace an elementary school building in Shelby County.**

## Linda France is KDE's new deputy commissioner

Linda Powell France, former superintendent of the Jessamine County public school district, is the Kentucky Department of Education's new deputy commissioner for the Bureau of Learning and Results Services. She joined the department on July 1.



Her career includes service in Jessamine and Fayette counties as an English teacher, guidance counselor, assistant principal, assistant superintendent and superintendent. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Kentucky and a Rank I certification, educational administration certification and superintendent certification from Eastern Kentucky University.

France's responsibilities at the Department of Education include oversight of services in finance, facilities, professional development, curriculum, early childhood, assessment, school-based decision making, exceptional children, federal programs and career and technical education.

She replaces Lois Adams-Rodgers, who accepted a leadership position with the Council of Chief State School Officers.

To contact France, phone (502) 564-5130 or send e-mail to [lfrance@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:lfrance@kde.state.ky.us).

## Guide helps explain school finance and the need for funding adequacy

A new resource, "Money Matters: A Reporter's Guide to School Finance," is available to education leaders and advocates who want to communicate through the media about education budgets and the need for funding equity and adequacy.

"Money Matters," published by Education Writers Association, highlights state-level efforts to correct funding disparities and explores funding adequacy, a concept that emphasizes how much money is needed to reach specific educational results.

The report explains the basics of school finance and has a glossary of terms, a comprehensive list of active school finance court cases, and profiles of North Carolina and New York cases involving contrasting definitions of what "sound basic education" means. The report also includes key finance data for all states and a list of expert sources with contact information.

Order online for \$12 per copy at [www.ewa.org/offers/publications](http://www.ewa.org/offers/publications).

Source: *Public Education Network "NewsBlast," June 20, 2003*

## National Forum selects Kentucky for middle-grades reform program

The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform has selected Kentucky, Colorado, Illinois and Virginia to implement its Schools to Watch program during 2003-04.

Education leaders in the four states will receive training on how to identify exceptional middle-grades schools as "schools to watch" and support in sharing exemplary practices with less-successful schools.

The states, chosen in a competitive selection process, join California, North Carolina and Georgia in the program.

Schools to Watch began in 1999 to identify middle-grades schools that were academically excellent, developmentally responsive and socially equitable and had organizational supports to sustain success. The program is a continuing effort to replicate the practices of outstanding middle schools.

The Forum's Web site ([www.schoolstowatch.org](http://www.schoolstowatch.org)) features online tours of the effective schools and detailed information about the selection criteria.

To learn more about The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform, visit [www.mgforum.org](http://www.mgforum.org).



# Rockcastle reaps results in reading and writing

By Joy Barr  
Kentucky Department of Education

*Rockcastle County schools are connecting reading, writing and the arts to boost students' literacy skills. Here are a few of the projects that integrate the arts into the district's language arts core content.*

### "Hi, Cat!"

At Rockcastle County Middle School, a performing arts presentation encouraged literacy and creativity. Eighth-grade drama students wrote, produced and performed a play by adapting author Ezra Jack Keats' "Hi, Cat!" into a presentation for preschool and primary students.

The students performed the play at elementary schools and for Storybook Hour participants at the Rockcastle County Public Library. Roundstone Elementary principal Lisa Noe offered a favorable review of the production and the results. "Hearing and seeing the students helped bring literacy to life (for elementary students)," she said.

Funding sources for the production included a mini-grant from the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation and a partnership between Rockcastle County Schools and the Rockcastle County Public Library.

### Storybook Chautauqua

The Storybook Chautauqua Series encouraged reading by bringing storybook characters to life. Six Rockcastle County High School students assumed the roles of historical and legendary personalities Pocahontas, Henry David Thoreau, Paul Revere, Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind Crockett, Johnny Appleseed and Betsy Ross. In costume, they delivered character monologues and then read from books about the people they portrayed.

The project combined history and dramatic interpretation with an emphasis on literacy. Before freshman Allison Carter could "become" Betsy Ross, she had to do extensive research. After reading a book about Ross to 3rd-graders at Roundstone Elementary, Allison demonstrated how to cut and display stars on an American flag. Students had several questions for "Betsy Ross" as she shared with them about her role in the early years of the United States.

### Music Hall of Fame

Another Rockcastle County literacy-through-the-arts project began when the school district joined forces with the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and Museum at Renfro Valley. The task was to develop a teaching guide and education packet for the museum's use. When Allen Pensol, the district's basic arts coordinator, began compiling a reading list for the teaching guide, he didn't get far.

"I discovered there weren't any books for young readers related specifically to Kentucky music or Ken-

tucky musicians and songwriters," he said. "There were several books on Appalachian music but not Kentucky music. So we decided to write our own."

With guidance from language arts teacher Jennifer Mattingly and visual arts teacher Les Scalf, several high school students began researching and writing "There's Music in Kentucky." In March, they celebrated the book's release with a signing party at the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame and Museum.

The 23-page hardback book includes student art and essays plus an original song reflecting the many genres of music associated with Kentucky and its most famous singers.

The district printed the book in partnership with the museum. Funding came from the museum through the Steel-Reese Foundation and Forward in the Fifth/School-to-Work Local Labor Market Area 16.



(Above) Allison Carter, dressed as Betsy Ross, reads to Roundstone Elementary students about the historical American she portrays.

(Right) Roundstone Elementary students enjoy the middle school presentation of "Hi, Cat!"

Photos by Joy Barr

"Seeing our work published through this project really brought home the idea of what Kentucky music is all about and how people lived and live through their music," said sophomore Kyla French.

Museum co-director Robert Lawson speaks with enthusiasm about the student's efforts. "The students met a real-world need," he said. "The book-writing project supported instructional content and gave students a feeling of achievement and success."

The students donated a copy of the book to every public school library in the district. Sharon Lovell, a library media specialist at Mount Vernon Elementary School, said the book "fills a gap in our Kentucky collection" in the area of music and artistic endeavors. "For years, the roots of Kentucky music have been ignored, forgotten or obscured," she said. "This book gives the reader a feel for the various musical talents from Kentucky who have become famous throughout the world. Their Kentucky heritage shines through."

For details about projects in Rockcastle County Schools, contact Allen Pensol at (606) 256-2125 or [apensol@rockcastle.k12.ky.us](mailto:apensol@rockcastle.k12.ky.us).



## What's New at KDE Online?

### Need proof of Kentucky's progress in education? It's on the Web!

By Jim Welp  
Kentucky Department of Education

Kentucky educators, do you sometimes think your hard work in the classroom goes unnoticed or – worse – gets unfairly criticized?

Have you heard people (including political campaigners) tossing around public education “facts” that are, shall we say, not exactly accurate?

Wishing for some easy-to-grab facts you could use to correct the misperceptions?

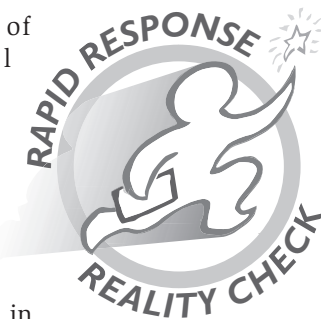
You can now find those facts all in one convenient place on the Internet! A new section of the Kentucky Department of Education Web site documents the progress of Kentucky's schools. “Proof of Progress” outlines the continuous improvement in P-12 education in Kentucky and provides data about progress in the following areas:

- the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (including links to independent validity studies)
- student performance on nationally normed tests
- student achievement as measured by the Na-

tional Assessment of Educational Progress

- students' ACT and SAT scores
- reductions in dropout and retention rates
- education technology
- Kentucky's position in national rankings
- national recognition of Kentucky public education programs

This new section puts accurate information just a click away. Data-supported details are available from a variety of sources, including each school's Kentucky Performance Report, School Report Card and Non-academic Data report, plus national research summaries, news stories and trend data. Trend lines for the four years of CATS implementation show how teaching and learning have improved in every content area and at every grade level.



A major feature is the updated-as-needed “Rapid Response Reality Check,” designed to shine light on any misleading comments that make their way into the public forum.

This new place on the Department of Education's Web site is a tool for anyone striving to build understanding and support for Kentucky's system of public education and inform the public about the need for adequate funding. The department invites educators to check out this new resource and spread the word about where to get the facts about progress in P-12 education in Kentucky.

#### Proof of Progress

The source for data-supported facts about continuous improvement in Kentucky's public schools

**[www.kentuckyschools.org](http://www.kentuckyschools.org)**

Click the “Proof of Progress” link, or enter “#progress” in the keyword/search box.

### New! Web offers one-stop shopping for professional development

A new, online resource gathers professional development information into one easy-to-use directory for educators who want to improve their skills, achieve their goals and help students learn.

The Professional Development/Training Opportunities Bulletin Board lists all professional development programs sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Education and opportunities offered by other providers who voluntarily participate. Department-sponsored programs are aligned with the state's 11 professional development standards.

While the department invites vendors to post training programs, such postings are a service to educators and not a department endorsement of any specific provider or program. Providers must get prior approval from the department to offer programs for Effective Instructional Leadership Act credit or advanced training credit for school-based decision making council members.

The Bulletin Board organizes professional development programs by topic and academic content area and ties them to Kentucky's nine standards and indicators for school improvement.

The department developed this resource as a service to Kentucky's educators and in compliance with state law KRS 156.090 (6). For more information, contact Elizabeth McGraph at [emcgrapt@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:emcgrapt@kde.state.ky.us) or (502) 564-4201.

To reach this new resource, go to the Department of Education's home page ([www.kentuckyschools.org](http://www.kentuckyschools.org)) and enter “#pd bulletin board” in the keyword/search box.



Photo by Rick McComb

#### Branching Out

Kenny Harris, a student from Rochester, N.Y., learns about snap willow trees from D.J. Scully, a University of Kentucky county extension agent. Kenny and his classmates came to Kentucky to visit students of Grant's Lick Elementary in Campbell County. Students of teacher Lynn Gatto in urban Rochester and students of teachers Reeda Hart and Jennifer Daum at rural Grant's Lick have learned from each other via e-mail, postal mail and video conferences for the past seven years. The visit in May was their first face-to-face meeting.



# Learning From the Birds!

## ‘Reality TV’ takes on new meaning at two Kentucky schools

By **Faun S. Fishback**  
Kentucky Department of Education

Instead of watching people survive, compete and connive on TV reality shows, students at Caldwell County Elementary School and McCracken County’s Heath Elementary School learn about life from unlikely TV stars: bluebirds, Carolina chickadees and ospreys.

Video cameras strategically placed at a nesting platform 15 feet above the waters of Lake Barkley and in nesting boxes outside both schools allow students to monitor birds throughout the nesting season. Some students work directly with the technology that makes classroom viewing possible. Other students watch the nests on TV monitors or Web sites and use their observations in classroom lessons.

While the programs at the schools differ slightly, their goals are the same: to connect students with the world around them. Along the way, students use technology and skills in nearly every content area: mathematics, science, social studies, writing, music and art.

Both programs involve partnerships with families, communities and research organizations. Students share their birdwatching information with people around the world via the Internet. In addition, students see first hand what many people may never have the opportunity to witness in the life cycles of birds.

“The day the first eggs hatched, the whole school was chirping,” said Lisa Alvey, a 4th-grade science teacher at Heath Elementary.

### Technology at Caldwell County Elementary

Last year at this school about 25 miles from Lake Barkley, Student Technology Leadership Program (STLP) members in grades 3 through 5 worked in partnership with Kentucky Environmental Education Projects (KEEP) Inc. on several projects. They used technology to increase public awareness and help provide safe nesting spaces for native Kentucky bird species, including ospreys. According to Caldwell County El-

ementary library media specialist and STLP leader Tammie Sanders, the numbers of successfully nesting ospreys in Kentucky had declined to zero for more than 50 years. Sanders said the birds have been making a steady comeback since they were reintroduced in the 1980s. However, some ospreys nesting in the Lake Barkley area in recent years have lost eggs and chicks because of flooding and high winds.

With guidance from KEEP Inc.’s founder and director Ed Ray, the students researched, designed, located and set up four nesting platforms for the ospreys, birds of prey also known as fish hawks. As students waited for state and federal approval of the nesting sites, the Cornell University Lab of Ornithology expressed interest in a “live cam” partnership to link a camera at one of the osprey platforms to The Birdhouse Network ([www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse/](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse/)).

During the project, students learned a lot about ospreys and live cam technology, Sanders said. The unique telescoping platform created by the students

and their project partner has attracted inquiries from bird enthusiasts from as far away as the state of Washington. The International Osprey Foundation has invited representatives of Caldwell County Elementary’s STLP group to share their Osprey Nesting Partnership project at the foundation’s meeting in Florida in March 2004.

The project received the STLP Outstanding Project award during the Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference in Louisville last March.

STLP members also learned patience and flexibility when ospreys chose to nest on two of the new platforms without camera access. When it became apparent that ospreys wouldn’t nest on the platform with the live cam, students moved the equipment back to the school and set it up to observe nesting Carolina Chickadees. The camera allowed students in the school and visitors to the online Birdhouse Network to watch four chickadee eggs hatch, grow to maturity and fledge from that nest last spring.

Students monitor a variety of bird boxes on school grounds. From their observations and involvement with Kentucky Bluebird Society education programs, they created a claymation movie, “The Big Bluebird Movie,” that features the life cycle of the Eastern bluebird. Third- and 5th-graders provided the words and a rap rhythm soundtrack. The production premiered last spring during the annual bluebird weekend hosted by the Kentucky Bluebird Society. It’s available for viewing on the Web at [www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse/news/your\\_projects\\_tsanders\\_movie.html](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/birdhouse/news/your_projects_tsanders_movie.html) and at [www.tech4learning.com](http://www.tech4learning.com).

“Birds are easy to study,” said Sanders, who holds a Rank I in environmental education. She and Ray, who works with KEEP Inc. and the Kentucky Bluebird Society, have developed units of study including lessons on ospreys and chickadees, bluebirds and other birds who build nests in pockets, hollows and cavities. The lessons, developed for intermediate students, are vertically and horizontally aligned to Kentucky’s Core Content. However, Sanders points out, teachers at any level may adapt the lessons and determine their own level of involvement with the bird study.

(Continued on next page)

*“The day the first eggs hatched, the whole school was chirping!”*

Lisa Alvey  
Grade 4 science teacher, Heath Elementary



With guidance from a community volunteer, Caldwell County Elementary students prepare to install cables connecting a video camera posted at Lake Barkley to a monitor on shore. When the ospreys they had planned to monitor decided to build nests on platforms not covered by the camera, the students moved the “live cam” equipment to observe nesting Carolina Chickadees at their school.

Photo Courtesy Caldwell County Public Schools

(Continued from Page 6)

The units of study and a link to the Caldwell County Elementary nest cam are posted on the new Kentucky-specific environmental education Web site, AWAKE (see story below).

For more information, contact Tammie Sanders at [tsanders@caldwell.k12.ky.us](mailto:tsanders@caldwell.k12.ky.us) or (270) 365-8032.

### Scientific Inquiry at Heath Elementary

For nearly three years, Lisa Alvey's 4th-grade science students have gotten up-close and personal with bluebirds as part of their life science studies. Alvey says her students have seen things via a nest cam that even lifelong birdwatchers have never seen.

Among other things, students have watched the female eat egg-shell fragments after each bird hatches, possibly to get extra calcium for the next nesting period. They've also seen the male bluebird clean the nest and carry off fecal sacs, the bird equivalent of

disposable diapers.

Heath Elementary students watch the birds on classroom TV monitors, then share their scientific observations through video presentations and Web sites. Anyone in the world can access the school's "Bluebird Project" from the McCracken County School District's Web site ([www.mccracken.k12.ky.us](http://www.mccracken.k12.ky.us)), from The Birdhouse Network (address above) and from the Kentucky Bluebird Society's Web site ([www.biology.uky.edu/kybluebirds.html](http://www.biology.uky.edu/kybluebirds.html)). Alvey's husband, Dennis, and community volunteers compiled

nest cam footage to create the video that is available on the society's Web site.

The society supplied five nesting boxes, which Alvey and her students placed on school property. Heath Elementary is one of the society's registered bluebird trail sites, and the school soon will become a "feeder watch" station to track native birds that visit the school's outdoor classroom.

Also, a local home improvement store provides materials for birdhouses that parents and grandparents assemble. Students decorate the houses and take them home to attract birds to their yards. Alvey said the students sell some of the decorated birdhouses to raise money for expanding the project.

"It's neat to see everyone come together," Alvey said. "This project has been well worth the time and effort because of what the students are learning. I'm eager to see our scores in life science (on the 2003 Kentucky Core Content Tests)."

For more information, contact Lisa Alvey at [lalvey@mccracken.k12.ky.us](mailto:lalvey@mccracken.k12.ky.us) or (270) 538-4060.

#### Establish a bluebird trail at your school

The Kentucky Bluebird Society will provide up to five bluebird boxes with posts and hardware to any Kentucky school that will establish an educational bluebird program as part of the society's Outdoor Classroom Enrichment Program. The group also provides information on how to set up an inexpensive but reliable live cam system.

According to Ed Ray, the society's education director, the program is aligned with Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment. Instructional activities, developed by Ray and Caldwell County Elementary library media specialist Tammie Sanders, is available on the organization's Web site at [www.biology.uky.edu/kybluebirds.html](http://www.biology.uky.edu/kybluebirds.html). Scroll to the "KBS Links" section and click on "Outdoor Classroom Enrichment Program."

The Kentucky Bluebird Society selects student works for publication in its newsletter and invites students to present projects at annual society meetings. Students post photos and information about their trails on the society's Web site.

For additional information, contact Ed Ray at (270) 924-5831 or [edrayosprey@yahoo.com](mailto:edrayosprey@yahoo.com).

## AWAKE takes students into state's ecosystems and beyond

A new Internet resource, All Wild About Kentucky's Environment (AWAKE), can help students learn about Kentucky plants, animals and natural environment. Teachers can find this new resource at [www.kentuckyawake.org](http://www.kentuckyawake.org).

"Research suggests that using the environment as a context for instruction can improve student achievement in all subject areas and can motivate students in ways that traditional education often cannot," says Carol Hanley, extension specialist for 4-H Youth Development Education and director of P-12 Environmental Education at the Tracy Farmer Center for the Environment.

The University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, UK's Tracy Farmer Center and the Kentucky Department of Education are partners in the Web site. The resource also can be helpful in learning projects offered by groups such as Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H, environmental and science clubs.

Lincoln County 4th-grade teacher Stacy Carrier calls the Web resource "an excellent tool" for integrating technology into lesson plans across the curriculum. "AWAKE allows students to experience the environment in our state in unique and creative ways," she said. "It's a fun, innovative way to put excitement into the school day."

AWAKE provides ideas for nature-related research



and activities through these links:

- Plants and Wildlife – life histories containing information on life cycles and many other topics listed in Kentucky's Core Content for Assessment. State biologists developed each history with Kentucky-specific information. In addition, there are characteristics of organisms, external anatomy and student challenges.
- Nature Notebooks – illustrated biological field notes from Kentucky Afield Magazine.
- Habitats and Ecosystems – descriptions of Kentucky ecosystems and the plants and animals living there. This section also includes interactive posters.
- Curriculum – P-12 units and curriculum ideas connected to natural themes including forestry, endangered species and energy conservation.
- Wild About Art – a gallery for posting students'

and teachers' artwork. For teachers: ideas on integrating art into the science curriculum, tips on creating effective artwork using nature themes and units on nature art themes.

- Wild About Reading and Writing – for posting work related to nature themes. Also available: annotated samples of student work, teacher and professional writing, and literature associated with nature topics.
- Ask the Expert – for submitting questions about Kentucky nature or education topics. Experts in various environmental fields post their responses on the site.

The site also features a glossary, headlines and events, and links to other sites for student research.

To submit writing or art samples, students must send their work plus a release form (available on the Web site) to Stephanie Jenkins at the Tracy Farmer Center for the Environment, 233 Mining and Minerals Building, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40506. Jenkins' e-mail address is [swjenk2@uky.edu](mailto:swjenk2@uky.edu). Teachers may submit curriculum suggestions, quizzes and games to the same address. Each submission will be credited to its author.

For more information about AWAKE, contact Carol Hanley at [chanley@uky.edu](mailto:chanley@uky.edu) or Venita Bright at [venita.bright@mail.state.ky.us](mailto:venita.bright@mail.state.ky.us).



# In Kentucky schools, ‘AP’ stands for ‘anything’s possible’!

*‘Great equalizer’ makes Advanced Placement courses accessible to all Kentucky students*

By Fran Salyers  
Kentucky Department of Education

Daryl Swartzentruber was breezing through high school, making A’s without breaking a sweat.

His parents, teachers and counselor – and Daryl himself – knew he was up to greater challenges. So, in his junior year, Daryl signed up for Advanced Placement (AP) U.S. History. At last, something this academic high-achiever could sink his teeth into!

“The AP class was quite a bit more work than any regular high school class,” Daryl recalls. “I was surprised at the amount of time I had to spend working ... but I was amazed at how much I was learning and how much I was enjoying it. It truly was a challenge.”

In his senior year, he kicked it up a notch by enrolling in AP U.S. Government, AP Statistics, AP Calculus and a high-level physics course. He scored high marks in all.

With that kind of academic background, Daryl was a hot prospect for colleges and universities competing to attract the best and brightest. After considering his options, he accepted the William T. Young Scholarship, the top scholarship offered at Transylvania University in Lexington. He started his freshman year in the fall of 2002 with 15 college hours already earned through his AP high school coursework.

Thank goodness Daryl attended a high school that could challenge him academically and offer courses that paved his way into a prestigious and selective college! But if you’re thinking Daryl graduated from a big urban high school or a private college prep academy, think again. Daryl is a graduate of Buckhorn High, a Perry County school with fewer than 300 students and an annual graduating class of 50 or so.

Until a few years ago, Buckhorn and other small, rural high schools in Kentucky could hardly offer one AP course, much less several. Such schools have small faculties. Assigning a teacher to teach an AP class with one or two students instead of a general class with 20 students is not practical. Also, most small schools lack the money for the college-level lab equipment and text-

books necessary for AP courses. Passing those textbook expenses along to parents can make low-income students financially unable to participate.

Enter Kentucky Virtual High School. This program, which opened its virtual doors in January 2000, is the great equalizer. Through KVHS, Buckhorn High and other small, rural schools can offer students the same advanced courses that large, urban schools have

*“We can offer our students the same curriculum as the larger schools. ... In fact, it’s become a recruiting tool for us. We can offer the best of both worlds: a rigorous curriculum and small class sizes.”*

Counselor Peggy Vires, commenting on rural Buckhorn High School’s ability to provide Advanced Placement and other high-level courses through Kentucky Virtual High School

offered for years.

Daryl was the first Buckhorn student to complete an AP course via KVHS. He used a networked

computer to connect with lessons, assignments, research materials and the KVHS teachers who guided him through the courses and prepared him to take and pass AP exams for college credit.

A few other Buckhorn students signed up for online AP classes in 2002-03. Peggy Vires, the school’s guidance counselor, reports that more students plan to do so in the future. Two have applied for scholarships to take AP German IV.

Buckhorn offers a few AP courses on site. Four of the school’s teachers (including Daryl’s father, Philip Swartzentruber, who teaches mathematics) are trained to teach AP classes. They frequently use the online AP resources to supplement their classroom teaching.

“At Buckhorn, we use KVHS in conjunction with what our teachers can teach in-house,” Vires said. “We’re such a small school. We can’t offer every course in our classrooms every year, and we can’t offer the full range of AP classes. Through KVHS and the courses available through Kentucky Educational Television, we can offer the same curriculum as the larger schools. In fact, it’s become a recruiting tool for us. We can offer our students the best of both worlds: a rigorous curriculum and small class sizes.”

Similar perspectives come from other small schools and districts. At the Frankfort Independent district in central Kentucky, library media specialist Gayle Gray is a cheerleader for AP via KVHS. Though a strong supporter of the program, she points out some limitations and cautions.

“Students taking Internet-based lessons do not have face-to-face contact with the teachers,” Gray said. “That seems to be more important to students than I would have thought.”

She cautions schools to be realistic when offering KVHS opportunities. Because online coursework requires high levels of independent learning, Frankfort High makes KVHS available only to motivated self-starters. Gray reports that students there who succeed in KVHS courses are those who do well in other classes and enjoy working on their own.

Frankfort High offers AP English, AP Calculus and AP U.S. History in the traditional classroom setting and uses

*(Continued on next page)*



Photo by Rick McComb

Daryl Swartzentruber used his computer during the summer to connect with e-mail and other online resources from his rural eastern Kentucky home. His computer skills also came in handy when counselors and teachers at his high school, 500-student Buckhorn High in Perry County, encouraged him to take Advanced Placement courses through the Web-based Kentucky Virtual High School. The high achiever completed enough online courses during high school to enter Transylvania in 2002 with 15 hours of college credit.



AP (from Page 8)

KVHS to give students access to additional AP courses it cannot offer directly. The school pays the student registration fee for each KVHS class but requires students who drop out or fail KVHS courses to reimburse the school.

Both Frankfort High and Buckhorn High benefited from grants to launch KVHS opportunities in their schools. Now that the grant period is ending, Gray and Vires voice concerns that tight economic times could make it difficult for their schools to pay for KVHS courses and teacher training in the future. “That would be a great loss to our students and our school if we didn’t have this opportunity,” Gray said.

Most likely to succeed

- Students who are successful in KVHS courses generally have the following abilities and characteristics:
- Basic skills in keyboarding, getting online, using e-mail, using word processing software
  - Solid academic preparation, basic mastery of writing, analytical skills
  - Self-motivation, self-discipline and determination to succeed, ability to learn independently
  - Regularly scheduled access to an Internet-connected computer that meets KVHS minimum technical requirements
  - Time and opportunity to study (for Advanced Placement courses, at least 12 hours per week per course – six hours online and six hours of offline study)
  - Strong support from school and home

Most KVHS courses are structured for grades 9 - 12 but are open to qualified middle school students with the recommendation of their schools and approval of course instructors. A 10-question quiz is available to help students measure their readiness for independent, Web-based learning. See “Is Online Learning for Me?” on the Web site (www.kvhs.org) under “Admissions.”

The school’s role

- The school is the final approval point in the KVHS registration process.
  - The school is the authority for awarding high school credits for KVHS coursework.
  - The school determines whether KVHS course fees are paid by the school or by the student.
  - If awarding high school credit for KVHS courses, the school purchases the textbooks and other instructional materials required for those courses. (Students must pass exams to qualify for college credit for completed AP courses.)
  - The school designates a KVHS contact to support students enrolled in KVHS courses and communicate with KVHS teachers.
- KVHS resources include grants, teacher and student scholarships, professional development options and other resources to help schools comply with the law requiring every Kentucky public high school to offer a core curriculum of Advanced Placement, dual credit or dual enrollment opportunities.
- KVHS courses are also available to Kentucky residents who are schooled at home or in nonpublic schools and to adults seeking a high school diploma.

For details

Visit Kentucky Virtual High School at www.kvhs.org. Explore the 19 AP classes available to students in 2003-04. Then follow the information and registration links online or contact the KVHS office at (502) 564-4772, toll free at (866) 432-0008, or by e-mail at nhill@kde.state.ky.us.

Why is ‘AP’ so important?

- According to the United States Department of Education, Advanced Placement is important because:
- High school seniors who took no AP courses graduated from college at a rate of only 33 percent by age 30.
  - Those students who took only one Advanced Placement course in high school nearly doubled the likelihood of college graduation to 59 percent.
  - Students who took two or more AP courses raised the likelihood to 76 percent, well above the average college graduation rate of 63 percent.

Kentucky History and Culture

Two Opportunities for Teaching and Learning



Photo courtesy of Kentucky Folklife Festival

(Left) Alfombras, Latino designs of colored sawdust created on pathways during Holy Week, will be one of many traditions demonstrated at this year’s Kentucky Folklife Festival, scheduled for Sept. 25-27 in downtown Frankfort. The event will showcase crafts, music, dance, foods and other traditions from diverse communities throughout the state. The Kentucky Historical Society and the Kentucky Arts Council sponsor the event. To register student groups for festival participation (\$2 per student), contact Jennie Boyd at (502) 564-1792, ext. 4424, or jennie.boyd@mail.state.ky.us. For information about the event, visit www.kyfolklife.org.

(Right) Private Robert Garner of Frankfort was one of 12,584 African Americans from Kentucky who served in the U.S. armed forces during World War I. His will be one of the stories told in a new exhibit at the Kentucky History Center, “Joining the Ranks: African Americans in the Military.” Scheduled to open Sept. 13, the exhibit combines objects, images, sound and interactive elements to examine African Americans’ participation in the armed forces from the mid-



Photo courtesy of Mattie Davis and Kentucky Historical Society Special Collections and Archives

# Newspapers to publish third chapter story

Beginning the week of Oct. 20, the Kentucky Network for Newspaper in Education (KNNIE) will present the third of its award-winning chapter stories. Participating newspapers throughout the state will publish Jennifer Armstrong’s “The Winner’s Circle” in 18 chapters for students in grades 4-12.

Readers will travel with the story’s main character, Ben, as he learns some of life’s most valuable lessons. Rich in moral dilemmas and steeped with chapter-by-chapter high adventure, “The Winner’s Circle” is full of the sights, sounds and smells of horse country.

Online learning activities connected with Kentucky’s academic standards will be available for classroom use at [www.kypress.com](http://www.kypress.com). Through LG&E Energy Foundation sponsorship, scrapbooks will be available for students who want to collect the chapters. Contact local newspaper offices this fall to find out how to get the scrapbooks and copies of “The Winner’s Circle” for classroom use.

Publication of the story is part of “Kentucky’s Rockin’ Readin’ Revolution 2003,” sponsored by KNNIE, the Kentucky Press Association and LG&E Energy Foundation. For more information, contact Kriss Johnson at [kjohnson@kypress.com](mailto:kjohnson@kypress.com).

# Book Fair to host sale for librarians only

The Kentucky Book Fair, an annual event that draws thousands of patrons to Frankfort to meet authors and buy their latest books at discounted prices, will also offer a separate sale open only to school and public librarians.

The librarians-only sale will be at the Farnham Dudgeon Civic Center from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 7. The public sale is set for 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 8, at the same location. While the librarians-only sale will not include most of the authors scheduled to participate at the public sale, it will include most of the books.

Librarians are eligible for a 20 percent discount on purchases. Buyers at the public sale will receive a 10 percent discount.

The Kentucky Book Fair, identified by organizers as one of the largest of its kind in the nation, honors the profession of writing, provides a format for ap-

proximately 150 authors to meet their reading public, and raises money through the sale of books. Gross sales exceed \$140,000 annually. Profits benefit libraries throughout the state. Event sponsors include The State Journal (Frankfort’s daily newspaper), the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, University Press of Kentucky and Joseph Beth Booksellers of Lexington.

Librarians must have identifying documentation and a ProCard or purchase order plus tax identification number to qualify for the 20 percent library discount on Friday and Saturday. For details about the annual event, visit [www.kdla.net/kybookfair.htm](http://www.kdla.net/kybookfair.htm). For more information about the librarians-only sale, contact Kentucky Book Fair Manager Connie Crowe at [kybookfair@kdla.net](mailto:kybookfair@kdla.net) or (502) 564-8300, ext. 297. Her fax number is (502) 564-5773.

# Alternate assessment training sessions scheduled

The Kentucky Alternate Portfolio Assessment Project has announced its educator training schedule for the 2003-04 school year.

Alternate portfolios provide schools and programs a valid and reliable means of assessing the instruction provided to students with moderate and significant disabilities.

**Portfolio Development Training** is a full-day session for special education teachers, general education teachers, school administrators, paraprofessionals and parents. This optional training is available on these dates:

- Sept. 9, Hazard (Perry County), Hazard Community College
- Sept. 10, Grayson (Carter County), Conference Center
- Sept. 16, Somerset (Pulaski County), Center for Rural Development
- Sept. 17, Lexington, Cardinal Hill Hospital Education Center
- Sept. 18, Burlington (Boone County), Ellis Coopera-

tive Extension


- Sept. 23, Princeton (Caldwell County), Research and Education Center
- Sept. 24, Bowling Green (Warren County), Western Kentucky University

A session in Louisville is also planned. Follow-up work sessions will be scheduled for early winter and spring. Watch the Web site ([www.ihdi.uky.edu/kap](http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/kap)) for details.

**Alternate Portfolio Scoring Training** is mandatory for all teachers who have students submitting alternate portfolios. Sessions are scheduled during 2004 in these locations:

- March 16, Princeton
- March 17, Bowling Green
- March 23, Somerset
- March 24, Lexington
- March 25, Hazard
- March 30, Burlington
- March 31, Grayson

Another session is being planned for Louisville.



## Talk to us!

*Kentucky Teacher* wants to know what you think, what you need from the Department of Education, what you want to see in future issues.

**E-mail** [kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us)


**Phone** (502) 564-3421 or (800) 533-5372  
(toll free in Kentucky)

**Fax** (502) 564-6470

**Write** Kentucky Teacher  
1914 Capital Plaza Tower  
500 Mero St.  
Frankfort, KY 40601

## Inside Kentucky Schools

**A Kentucky Department of Education Production**



**30 minutes of news and features about education in Kentucky**

- Second and fourth Saturday of every month at 5 p.m. Eastern/4 p.m. Central on KET
- Second and fourth Sunday at 3 p.m. Eastern/2 p.m. Central on KET2

Please check TV listings for air times on local cable stations.

For program information, visit [www.kentuckyschools.org](http://www.kentuckyschools.org)

Host Pia Cummings

**Alternate Portfolio Mandatory Scoring Sessions** help teachers calibrate alternate assessment scoring with all aspects of reliable and valid scoring across the Kentucky Alternate Assessment rubric. Teachers developing alternate portfolios will practice scoring using excerpts from sample alternate assessment portfolios. Sessions are scheduled for these dates in 2004:

- May 4, Burlington
- May 5 and 6, Lexington
- May 6, Grayson
- May 11, Hazard
- May 13, Somerset
- May 18, Princeton
- May 19 and 20, Bowling Green

A Louisville location and date will be announced.

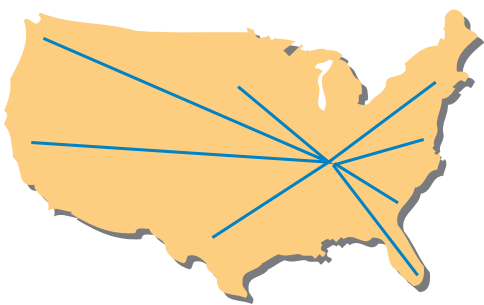
For details about training, technical assistance and other services available from the Kentucky Alternate Portfolio Project, visit [www.ihdi.uky.edu/kap](http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/kap) on the Web or contact Mark Hurte at [mhurte@uky.edu](mailto:mhurte@uky.edu) or (859) 257-7672, extension 80249. Hurte’s fax number is (859) 323-1838.



# Bulletin Board

By Joy Barr  
Kentucky Department of Education

## Conference Connection



**National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth** – Oct. 16-19, Washington, D.C. Theme: Educating All Our Nation’s Children: A Capital Event. Registration information: [www.wm.edu/education/HOPE/NAEHCY/NAEHCY.php](http://www.wm.edu/education/HOPE/NAEHCY/NAEHCY.php)

**The International Association for Truancy and Dropout Prevention** – Oct. 25-29, Radisson Plaza Hotel, Lexington. Registration information: [www.iatdp.org](http://www.iatdp.org)

**Kentucky Association of School Councils** – Oct. 23 and 24, Executive West, Louisville. Theme: What Matters Most in Improving Student Achievement. Agenda and registration materials: [www.kasc.net](http://www.kasc.net) or Nan Givhan, (859) 238-2188

**Kentucky Association for Assessment Coordinators (KAAC)** – Oct. 27 and 28, Galt House East, Louisville. Theme: Educational Equity for All Students. Registration: [www.kaac.org](http://www.kaac.org)

**African American Heritage Forum** – Sept. 27, Gheens Professional Development Academy, Louisville. Theme: A New Curriculum for a New Millennium – African American Heritage and the Racial Achievement Gap. Registration information: Nicole Harris, [nharris@mail.state.ky.us](mailto:nharris@mail.state.ky.us) or (502) 564-7005

**Kentucky Association for Environmental Education** – Sept. 19-21, General Butler State Resort Park, Carrollton. Theme: Environmental Education – the Core of Discovery. Registration information: [www.kaee.org](http://www.kaee.org) or [bingkate@epowerc.net](mailto:bingkate@epowerc.net)

**International Bluegrass Music Association’s “Using Bluegrass Music to Teach Core Content and Connect With Learners” Workshop** – Oct. 4 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Galt House, Louisville. Professional development certificates. Multiple sessions plus complimentary pass to Saturday session of Bluegrass Fan Fest. Free to educators and their guests (up to 50 participants). Details and registration: [www.ibma.org](http://www.ibma.org) or Nancy Cardwell at IBMA, (888) GET-IBMA, (615) 256-3222, or [nancyc@ibma.org](mailto:nancyc@ibma.org)

### New online resource offers one-stop shopping for ‘PD’

The Kentucky Department of Education’s new Professional Development/Training Opportunities Bulletin Board features quick access to information about all department-sponsored professional development programs and opportunities offered by other providers.

The online Bulletin Board presents professional development programs by topic and academic content area and ties them to Kentucky’s standards and indicators for school improvement.

See Page 5 in this issue for details.

### Crime prevention and education cartoon series available to educators

“McGruff ’Toons® – Tips for Parents” is available in both English and Spanish to educate adults about ways they can help children deal with violence, crime and other tough issues. The series of eight cartoons gives concise advice and information about proven ways to help children prevent and cope with crime-related situations. Check out the cartoons at [www.weprevent.org/toons/index.html](http://www.weprevent.org/toons/index.html).

### NCREL offers guide to curriculum mapping

The spring 2003 issue of “Notes and Reflections,” a publication of the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL), provides a step-by-step guide to curriculum mapping, a process for implementing a curriculum aligned with standards and assessments. Case examples are available online at [www.ncrel.org/info/notes/spring03/index.html](http://www.ncrel.org/info/notes/spring03/index.html).

### Read a poem a day

National poet laureate Billy Collins offers 180 poems by 180 poets to read and ponder. To view, visit online at [www.loc.gov/poetry/180/p180-list.html](http://www.loc.gov/poetry/180/p180-list.html).

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

# Kentucky Teacher™

Kentucky Teacher is published by the Kentucky Department of Education for teachers, school administrators, counselors, support staff, parents, students, legislators, community leaders and others with a stake in public education. Please address correspondence to Kentucky Teacher, 1914 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Metro St., Frankfort, KY 40601; e-mail kyteacher@kde.state.ky.us.

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AUGUST 2003



Photo by Rick McComb

## Learning Bit by Bit

Jacob Salley prepares his horse, "Prissy," for competition at Franklin County's Lakeview Park. The competition was part of a summer event sponsored by 4-H, the University of Kentucky School of Agriculture and the Kentucky Department of Education.